

News from Ed Markey

United States Congress

Massachusetts Seventh District

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

June 21, 2005

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REP. MARKEY, CLIFFORD THE BIG RED DOG, KIDS, TO HOUSE REPUBLICANS: ‘DON’T STARVE BIG BIRD’

Lawmakers, Families Call For Restoration of \$100 Million for Public Broadcasting

Washington, D.C. – Representative Markey, the ranking member on the House Subcommittee on Telecommunications and the Internet, was joined by U.S. Senator Hillary Clinton (D-NY), U.S. Representatives John Dingell (D-MI), Nita Lowey (D-NY), Louise Slaughter (D-NY), Anna G. Eshoo (D-CA), Jan Schakowsky (D-IL), Earl Blumenauer (D-OR), and Clifford the Big Red Dog and other PBS characters, Action for Children’s Television, Children NOW, and the National Parent Teacher’s Association on Capitol Hill in a rally to against a Republican proposal to cut \$100 million of funding for local and national public television and radio broadcasting programming.

“We are here today to send a message to Republican leaders: Don’t starve Big Bird,” said Rep. Markey, speaking to children, and parents waving signs with message for Congress ‘C is for Cookie not for Cuts’ ‘My Mom watches NPR.’ Rep. Markey went on to address the crowd, “Public broadcasting remains an electronic oasis for learning in what has been called the vast wasteland of commercial television. For the cost of less than \$2 per year per person what parents and kids get from public TV is an incredible bargain. The question is not, “Can we afford it?” but rather, “Can we afford to lose it?”

Peggy Charren, long-time advocate of public broadcasting spoke to the rally of lawmakers, children and PBS characters said, “The Ready to Learn Service is one of the most creative pieces of legislation Congress ever passed. To do away with it would undermine the future of millions of American Children.”

Charren and other supporters of quality children’s programming joined the Members of Congress in accepting a petition, signed by over 1 million Americans, pleading with Congress to reverse the proposed cuts. The petition, organized by Moveon.org, brought the voices of children and families from across the country to the Capitol. Dina Mishra, one of the millions of voiced brought to Congress through the petition wrote, ‘Sesame Street teaches good values, strong learning skills, and most importantly, instills children with a love of learning and an inquisitiveness that proves valuable their whole lives long. NPR does the same for adults! please save them both!’

These CPB cuts come on top of a controversy over the political balance of public broadcasting. Ken Tomlinson, the CPB Chairman, has come under recent criticism for his campaign to inject partisanship and conservative viewpoints into PBS programming. Today Representative Markey called for Tomlinson’s resignation, “Mr. Tomlinson has let his zeal for imposing his own view of “political balance” on public broadcasting interfere with his core mission – to protect the nation’s premier children’s television network from funding cuts. He should resign.”

Moveon.org, National PTA, Free Press, Common Cause, the United Church of Christ, American Academy of Child and Adolescent Psychiatry, National Institute on Media and the Family are just a few of the organizations urging Congress to restore funding for PBS. According to the non-partisan Roper polling firm, Americans believe that PBS is the best use of tax dollars, only outranked by military defense spending. The poll results also show that the majority of Americans believe the federal funding that PBS currently receives is “too little.” But last week the House Appropriations Committee approved drastic cuts in programs for public broadcasting.

For more information on the petition check out <http://www.moveon.org/publicbroadcasting/> for information about Representative Markey’s work to preserve children’s television check out <http://www.house.gov/markey/>.

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